

IN HONOR OF CARIBBEAN-  
AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH, 2006

**HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 21, 2006*

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, as an original sponsor of H. Con. Res. 71 and Ranking Member of the House International Relations Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, I rise to pay tribute to the designation of June as National Caribbean-American Heritage Month. I also congratulate Rep. BARBARA LEE (D-CA) for her successful leadership in ensuring unanimous passage of H. Con. Res. 71 in both the House and Senate, and extend my thanks to the numerous bipartisan cosponsors who helped make passage possible. Caribbean-American Heritage month honors the tremendous contributions of Caribbean-Americans to our Nation's fabric, and recognizes that our nations are bound together by cultural ties, social and economic links, and common values.

People of Caribbean heritage are found in every State of the Union, including large populations, in New York, and have been contributing to our Nation's success since the American colonies. My constituents of Caribbean heritage have contributed to our great country in the fields of education, fine arts, business, literature, journalism, sports, fashion, politics, government, the military, music, science, technology, and other areas, and help illustrate the ongoing contribution of immigrants and their descendants to our Nation's fabric and success. Caribbean-Americans enrich and strengthen our society.

I encourage all citizens to participate in the celebration of Caribbean-American Heritage month and to learn more about the contributions of Caribbean-Americans and our strong ties to Caribbean nations. I also congratulate and join Caribbean-Americans in their celebration of their rich heritage.

**CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF ST. PETER'S CATHOLIC CHURCH**

**HON. JOE WILSON**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 21, 2006*

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, The Columbia Star reported on June 16, 2006 an article highlighting the 100 year Birthday Bash to celebrate 100 years of St. Peter's Catholic Church in Columbia, South Carolina, occupying its present building on Assembly Street. Jennifer Miskewicz, an anchor from WIS News 10 and member of St. Peter's, presided over the day's events.

St. Peter's Church is the Mother Church of the Midlands of South Carolina being established in 1821.

A brief history of the church is a testimonial to the importance of the church to the citizens of South Carolina.

The earliest record of Catholics in Columbia, South Carolina, is in association with Father James Wallace who in the early 1800's became Professor of Mathematics and Astronomy at the newly-formed South Carolina College. It is said that during his tenure Fr. Wallace celebrated Mass for the small but growing community of Catholics in the Midlands. (He is buried in St. Peter's churchyard.)

In 1820 the Diocese of Charleston was established. It included all of South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia. Early in 1821 the newly-appointed Bishop John England sent Father Dennis Corkery to pastor and attend the welfare of a group of Irish immigrants working on the Columbia Canal. This was the beginning of St. Peter's Parish. By 1824 work began on a small brick church designed by renowned architect Robert Mills. The cornerstone of that building can still be seen in the vestibule of the present church.

Since it was the only parish in the Midlands and Upstate in those early years, the pastors of St. Peter's traveled by horseback to serve small groups of Catholics throughout that vast territory. For the most part, Catholics in the South at that time were of humble circumstances, many operating small farms, some retail stores and a fraction of them employed at some of the developing state institutions. Few commanded positions of influence. This changed gradually, and by 1852, the construction of the State House and other public buildings brought additional Catholics to Columbia. Among these was John R. Niernsee, a native of Austria who became the architect for the State House. (He is buried in St. Peter's churchyard.)

**AN EDUCATIONAL MISSION**

As Columbia established itself, St. Peter's Parish grew and began to focus attention and energy on an educational ministry. In 1848 Father Jeremiah O'Connell became pastor of St. Peter's and soon founded St. Mary's College for young men and the Academy of the Immaculate Conception for young women. In 1859 the Ursuline sisters began teaching in these institutions. That same year, the church was renovated and enlarged to almost twice its original size.

The Civil War quickly put a halt to this progress, and on February 17, 1865, Union troops entered the city. Fire then destroyed not only much of Columbia but also the college and academy, along with the rectory and parish records. The church was damaged but not destroyed. The schools continued in operation from various locations initially through the efforts of General William T. Sherman and later through the hospitality of other churches and residents of Columbia. A rectory was eventually provided through the aid of the newly established Catholic Association of Columbia. In 1872 St. Peter's Cemetery was begun on land donated near the public cemetery on Elmwood Avenue. The parish then remained in steady operation to the end of the nineteenth century despite the difficulties associated with the years of the Reconstruction Era.

**A NEW BUILDING AND GROWTH**

The beginning of the twentieth century found the old church in such deteriorated condition that the parishioners decided to build a new and enlarged one. Frank P. Milburn, a prominent architect working at the time on the construction of the State House dome, was engaged to design and oversee the project. The cornerstone for a new English Gothic style church was laid in 1906. It was dedicated by Bishop Northrup on January 17, 1909. The total cost of the church including all its furnishings was \$60,506.64. The pastor, Father Thomas Hegarty, inspired and guided the community throughout the project. (He is buried in a side chapel in the vestibule of the church.) That same building continues to serve the community as its place of worship now into the twenty-first century.

In 1911, a lot on the corner of Assembly and Taylor Streets was purchased and a new rectory was built. With the assistance of the Knights of Columbus a new school building was erected in 1919. In 1920, St. Peter's helped establish a new parish in the Shandon area first known as St. Francis de Sales, later renamed St. Joseph. Monsignor Martin Murphy, a beloved pastor for over a quarter of the last century, helped found St. Martin de Porres Parish, Providence Hospital, and St. Patrick's Chapel.

**TOWARD A NEW CENTURY**

In 1964 the parish received its first American-born pastor, Monsignor William Croghan. During those same years many of the reforms initiated by the Second Vatican Council were introduced and implemented in the parish. St. Peter's witnessed increased lay involvement in the parish. St. Peter's witnessed increased lay involvement in the work of the church, particularly in ecumenical activities, outreach projects for the poor, and efforts for justice and peace. The interior of the church was remodeled during these years, but its more modern design proved to be inconsistent with the architectural style of the building. In later years it was again restored.

Since 1985 Monsignor Leigh Lehocky has been pastor of St. Peter's. On September 11, 1987, the parish had the great privilege of receiving Pope John Paul II where he greeted over 550 representatives from parishes throughout the diocese. The Pope's visit to Columbia also included an ecumenical dialogue with leaders from some twenty-six other Christian churches. Monsignor Lehocky, as diocesan Vicar for Ecumenism, has continued the spirit of the Pope, involving the parish in the work for Christian unity. On January 14, 1996, St. Peter's welcomed Cardinal Joseph Bernardin of Chicago, himself a child of the parish, to celebrate its 175th anniversary. In 1992, Bishop David Thompson dedicated the new parish school.

The history of Catholic Christians at St. Peter's touches into three centuries. Its life in Christ Jesus makes it ever ancient and yet always new.

**TRIBUTE TO MR. JOSHUA MARC JACOBSON**

**HON. THOMAS G. TANCREDO**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 21, 2006*

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate a young man from Greenwood Village, Colorado, Mr. Joshua Marc Jacobson. Joshua recently earned a Congressional Award Gold Medal.

The Congressional Award program challenges talented young men and women to be active in their communities, develop leadership skills, and challenge themselves physically and to go on expeditions domestically or internationally.

Josh completed over 400 hours of community service with the most rewarding project being a food drive that he organized as the chapter president of Future Business Leaders of America. His personal development goals were achieved through part-time work with local businesses. There he was able to develop skills in leadership that he will be taking with him as an intern for a U.S. Congressional